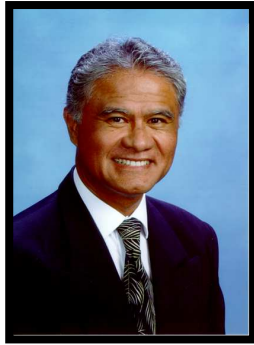




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# Senator Robert Bunda

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## Legislative Report North Shore Neighborhood Board February 28, 2006

### Legislative package to Benefit Agriculture in Hawaii

Creating a secure and sustainable future for Hawaii is a top priority for many legislators, myself included. One area that we need to focus on more aggressively is our agricultural industry. Last year, the Legislature passed significant legislation to identify and set aside land exclusively for agricultural use. This session, many of us have sponsored legislation to help our local farmers secure the most vital resource to agricultural growth, a dependable supply of water. Without this, agriculture will never be able to thrive and reach its full potential. When our farmers succeed, our community benefits in many ways.

Proposed legislation provides funding for repair and maintenance of aging statewide public and private irrigation systems and incentives for private landowners to maintain irrigation systems formerly used by sugar and pineapple growers.

The package also calls for a \$50 million special fund for repair and maintenance of irrigation systems, with \$12 million to be directed for immediate improvements to the five irrigation systems most in need. The fund will also be used to repair a total of 15 irrigation systems throughout the state over the next five years and for tax credits and loans for landowners who use private money for the repair and maintenance of irrigation systems on qualifying agricultural land.



*Senator Bunda inspects part of the aging irrigation system on the road to Waialua.*



*Without much needed improvements to the systems and regular repair and maintenance, the future of agriculture in the district is uncertain.*

## **Lack of Enforcement of Jet Ski Tow-In Teams on North Shore Prompts Inquiry to Department of Land and Natural Resources**

In response to concerns regarding a lack of enforcement of unauthorized jet ski tow-in teams on the North Shore, I have contacted the Chair of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Peter Young, and asked for his Department to address this issue.

This problem is an important public safety issue that must be addressed before a potentially fatal accident occurs. In a recent letter to the DLNR, I asked the Department to look into why unauthorized activity is allowed to continue in spite of complaints that been filed in the past, complete with registration numbers of the jet ski violators.

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**Senate Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs approves repeal of Act 212** which provides that a petty misdemeanor be charged against individuals who are accused of criminally trespassing on public parks and recreational grounds.

In testimonies provided to the committee on Friday, February 17, the rights and livelihood of Hawaii's homeless were brought to the forefront of discussion. Testifiers expressed concerns regarding the insensitivity of Act 212 with respect to homeless individuals and families, and the attendant lack of 'Aloha' spirit. In committee, Senator Whalen noted that there was a significant absence of testimony to counter the community's concern that this Act simply criminalized the homeless.

HPD's Captain Nishi noted in his testimony : *Passage of SB 2687 would "make it difficult to maintain conditions in the parks" taking away "the necessary enforcement action against those individuals on park property that have violated any terms of use for that park."*

Act 212 was not intended to solve the problem of homelessness in Hawaii. There are numerous bills before the legislature this session that seek to address this very issue.

With the current housing crisis, it is even more critical that we double our efforts to address the growing problem of homelessness in the state. However, passage of **SB 2687**, which repeals Act 212, is not an adequate response—indeed, it is worse than no response at all. Removing the accountability of any individual for trespassing on public land does not ensure the safety and security of the general welfare, nor does it promote or assist the livelihood and well-being of any individual who permanently or temporarily wants to reside in a public park or recreational ground. If this measure is approved by the full Senate, it will cross over to the House on March 9<sup>th</sup> and the debate will begin anew if House Judiciary Chair, Representative Sylvia Luke decides to hear Senate Bill 2687. (Call 586-8530, Fax 586-8534, e-mail [luke@capito.hawaii.gov](mailto:luke@capito.hawaii.gov))

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*For more information on what's happening this session or to track bills, look at committee hearing and briefing schedules, and much more, visit the State Legislature website at <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>.*